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Children's Literature, Volume 33, 2005, pp. 171-184 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/chl.2005.0016*

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"'Hansel, we're saved! The old witch is dead,'" Gretel triumphantly shouts as she opens the door to release her brother. The children promptly plunder the house of the crone Gretel has just killed. The happiness of these little survivors is unbounded. Even Wilhelm Grimm seems to want an editorial share in their expressions of fraternal glee: "How thrilled they were: they hugged and kissed and jumped up and down for joy!" (Tatar 189).[1]

But one slight obstacle remains. The children still must find their way back to the home of the parents who have twice left them to perish in a dark forest. How can the trauma of such a desertion be resolved? As Maria Tatar has suggested, perhaps more than any other Grimm fairy tale, "Hansel and Gretel" seems to "perpetuate strangely inappropriate notions about what it means to live ever happily after" (182). The fairy tale's ostensibly happy ending asks us to become as forgetful of the trauma of abandonment as the story's child protagonists. The alacrity they display upon coming home thus seems even more surprising than that of the returning Dorothy who, after her own witch-killings, so eagerly hugs Aunt Em. When all four versions of Grimm's story ask us to believe that Hansel and Gretel joyfully throw their arms around their father, we are invited to repress parental betrayal just as much as the sturdy children who have, against all odds, managed to survive extinction.[2]

Wilhelm Grimm's masculinist narrative conflates the witch with the children's bad mother and exculpates a husband who allows himself to be dominated by his wife: "The man had not had a happy hour since the day he had abandoned the children in the forest. His wife had died. Gretel emptied her apron and the pearls and jewels rolled all over the floor" (189–90). A derelict father is not only showered with diamonds, but is also awarded a more pliable replacement for the spouse who had tyrannized him. Not one, but two witches have been expunged from the narrative: the gluttonous child-devourer who fattened Hans and the bread-denying child-starver whom Grimm had

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alternately presented as the children's biological mother and as their stepmother. By offering her father a dowry of jewels, Gretel can now become his "little missus," as Captain Crewe, the imprudent diamond-mine investor, used to call the daughter he, just as imprudently, handed over to a witch, in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess*. But Burnett compensates Sara, and not her father, for the traumas he has induced. Indeed, in a poignant reversal of Gretel's act of bribery, Sara enlists another unhappy and weak father-figure, her guardian Carrisford, to help her spread her newfound wealth. The new heiress wants to feed masses of "hungry children" on "days" as "dreadful" as those behind her (185). Sara is as unembittered as little Gretel. But, unlike Gretel, she refuses to forget her protracted servitude as a starving slave-laborer. Whereas the ending of Grimm's tale invites us to repress the past, Burnett's narrative keeps alive a child's memory of betrayal, abuse, and deprivation.

In November 2003, when Maurice Sendak appeared with Tony Kushner after a performance of the Theresienstadt child-opera *Brundibar* at New York's 92nd Street "Y," he invoked the story of "Hansel and Gretel" as an analogue for the new picture book he and Kushner were presenting to the public. The links are certainly there. Pepicek and Aninku, the brother-sister pair in *Brundibar*, also must thread back to the cottage of a starving parent. But it is now a needy peasant mother, not a guilt-ridden woodcutter father, who becomes revitalized by returning offspring. And, whereas a witch was required to obtain the nourishment denied to Hansel and Gretel, the children in the Sendak/Kushner book are cast as nourishers from the very start. Nor will this pair be alone, for they eventually count on child-allies far more numerous than Sara Crewe's small band of friends. All threats are removed when a flock of blackbirds, depicted earlier as wresting children away from parents, chases away the Hitlerian bully Brundibar. Evil has been purged. There is no need for a little duck such as the one that ferried Hansel and Gretel back to their father. Aninku and Pepicek require no further help to facilitate their own happy return to a parental home. Brother and sister drag a huge canister of milk to their debilitated mother's bedside. She can now follow the milk cure prescribed by a rotund and jolly doctor whose yellow star suggests that he himself is under the threat of death. Shouting a hopeful "Mazel Tov," this Sendakian look-alike dances off but reappears, still gleefully gyrating, in the book's very last panel. Is a scribbled message from Brundibar, promising revenge, now meant to arrest the doctor's ebul-

lience? Can we, in other words, trust this opera/picture book's happy ending?

I.

Sendak told his New York audience that he regarded *Brundibar* as a reassuring closure for lifelong cultural and personal traumas inflicted by the Holocaust. The book's wishful happy ending, he hinted, offered him, Kushner, and readers young and old a link to the invincible hopefulness of the opera's Jewish child-actors, most of whom perished at Auschwitz.[3] The illustration of the blackbird-transported children and another drawing of a sad-faced Aninku and Pepicek among heaps of empty shoes in a deserted alley, Sendak conceded, might remind an adult reader that these children could never have survived their ordeal: "like Hansel and Gretel," Sendak ruefully claimed, "in my mind, they died." But the fantasy of their triumph over a Hitlerian bully, he insisted, should nonetheless become as uplifting as "the fantasy of killing the witch—for the witch-mother can't get away with this thing!"

By alluding to a single "witch-mother" in the Grimm text, Sendak displays the Freudian credentials he shares with other revisionist readers of "Hansel and Gretel," notably, Randall Jarrell, Anne Sexton, and Bruno Bettelheim. Like Kushner today, Jarrell was once an esteemed literary partner whose verbal texts Sendak illustrated. Even after the poet's 1965 death, Sendak drew Gretel and the witch for Jarrell's translation of "Hansel and Gretel" in *The Juniper Tree*; he also appropriated the text of *Fly By Night* to license a lavish dramatization of his own relation to a double-valent mother. The matriarchal closure of *Brundibar* thus not only replicates a formula Sendak had amply used in his own children's books (by dramatizing Max's return to the "still hot" supper left by his mother, for example, or by uniting Jenny with a Baby turned into a fat Mother Goose that resembles Sarah Sendak), but was also familiar from the endings of the three Jarrell fantasies for children he had illustrated, *The Animal Family, The Bat-Poet*, and *Fly By Night*.

Like the case studies of Anna and Sigmund Freud, "Hansel and Gretel" offered a crucial impetus for Randall Jarrell's creation of a host of adult poems that obsessively revisited his grim recollections of the childhood trauma of his own abandonment and of the wishful escapes that he had vainly concocted. A poem such as the 1955 "A

Quilt Pattern" weaves the Grimm fairy tale into the liminal consciousness of a boy whose mother has tried to lull him to sleep, perhaps by telling him this "oldest tale of all" (line 10). "The blocked-out Tree / Of the boy's Life" is not just depicted on his "tangled quilt" (ll. 1–2), but becomes transformed into the *un*blocked, terrifying dream-forest into which his aroused mind now wanders, a primal wood of witches, cages, and open graves.

The boy who "sucks at the finger" in Jarrell's poem is, like Hansel, asked to hold it out for inspection by a female presence that supervises his growth into manhood (l. 50). Deemed immature, however, he must withdraw this protrusion from the seductively feminine house that has called to him "in its slow singing voice" (l. 51). The boy wants to arrest his sexual awakening: the pleasures of a maternal bath quickly turn into his fear that "my mother is basting / Bad me in the bathtub" (ll. 38–9). A world of death has taken over: Hansel's imaginary "white cat" is now eating his equally imaginary "white pigeon"; and the boy whose mother calls him "my little mouse" has himself become a small furry thing, like rabbits "That are skinned, but that never die at all" (ll. 31, 78, 18). Yet beyond a little boy's terror lies an adult consciousness of the cultural aftermath of this scary tale. The obsession with hair (even the forest's blackberries are "small hairy things") or lost baby teeth thus does not just betoken the onset of puberty in a child beset by oedipal feelings. The hair, not yet severed from still unskinned creatures who crouch in cages before their slaughter, evokes Holocaust imagery as much as the "thousand stones" resembling "just-brushed, just-lost teeth" (ll. 55, 57) that have replaced the white pebbles left behind by Hansel. It is the oven, however, that Jarrell's boy most fears. Read merely from a Freudian perspective, this cavity represents the maternal genitals that the boy's "bad me" covets yet fears. But read from a post-Holocaust perspective, that oven also marks the resting place of those whose hair, teeth, and skins were removed by later killers of witch-like undesirables, of the "bad" Other:

> He has moved. . . . He is still now, and holds his breath.
> If something is screaming itself to death
> There in the oven, it is not the mouse
> Nor anything of the mouse's. Bad me, good me
> Stare into each other's eyes, and timidly
> Smile at each other: it was the Other. (ll. 71–6)

Anne Sexton's "Hansel and Gretel," the next-to-last poem in the 1971 volume *Transformations*, also opens with a conflation of the witch

with a mother whose devouring love for her little boy rapidly moves from cloying excess to vampiric threat. The first lines of the poem seem innocuous enough: "Little plum, / said the mother to her son, / I want to bite, / I want to chew, / I will eat you up" (ll. 1–5). Such exaggeration hardly appears to be any more frightening than that of the teeth-grinding Wild Things who implore little Max, "Oh please don't go / we'll eat you up—we love you so!" But a subtle shift occurs when the mother who has just proclaimed her "little nubkin" to be as "sweet as fudge" suddenly calls him "my blitz" rather than her "bliss." The Freudian slip is followed by a more concrete evidence of an aggressive disregard of her child's psychology: "I have a pan that will fit you. / Just pull up your knees like a game hen. / Let me take your pulse / and set the oven for 350. / Come, my pretender, my fritter, / my bubbler, my chicken biddy!" (ll. 17–22).

Sexton's satirical preamble, however, is followed by her more sardonic retelling of the Grimm tale. We are made uneasy as we join Hansel in overhearing the parental discussion of how best to dispose of docile undesirables. For Sexton's phrasing forces us to recognize the makings of a Nazi parable: "The final solution, / their mother told their father, / was to lose the children in the forest." When a Gretel who "bided her time" tricks the witch, however, she proves herself to be her mother's worthy offspring: "Ja, Fräulein, show me how it could be done," the child says cunningly (l. 101): "The witch thought this fair / and climbed in . . . / . . . . . / Gretel, / seeing her moment in history, / shut fast the oven, / locked fast the door, / fast as Houdini, / and turned the oven on to bake" (ll. 102–10). And yet, Sexton wryly suggests, this historical triumph of the will leaves a slightly tarnished aftermath. Back with their no longer famished father, the overstuffed children are faintly reminded of the atrocity that has led to their present bliss. Still, unlike Jarrell's disturbed boy, they are not exactly troubled: "Only at suppertime / while eating a chicken leg / did our children remember / the woe of the oven, / the smell of the cooking witch, / a little like mutton, / to be served only with burgundy / and fine white linen / like something religious" (ll. 123–30). The ingestion made possible by their former host seems to signify their communion with evil.

Whereas post-Freudians like Sexton and Jarrell are determined to revive the trauma that Wilhelm Grimm would encourage us to forget, Bruno Bettelheim curiously endorses Grimm's patriarchal slant in his reading of "Hansel and Gretel" in his widely circulated *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976). While Sendak, Jarrell, and Sexton suggest that

the revivification of a mother, whether threatening or herself threatened, might offer an antidote for childhood wounds, Bettelheim all but side-steps the major roles played by both Gretel and the dead mother whom the little girl replaces in her father's house. The conversation overheard by Hansel and Gretel is dismissed as a mere fantasy concocted by a small child who, "awakening hungry in the darkness of the night," justifiably "feels threatened by complete rejection and desertion" (160). The Grimm story presumably offers a healthy counter-fantasy to direct children away from "oral greediness" and "immature dependence": "A witch as created by the child's anxious fantasies will haunt *him*; but a witch *he* can push into her own oven and burn to death is a witch the child can believe *himself* rid of" (161, 166; my italics). Bettelheim's odd fusion of Gretel and Hansel into a single "he"-child here is as remarkable as his lack of interest in the mother-witch conflation he simply cites as a foil for Gretel's helpful services to her male "age mate." Since witch-slayers strike him as heroic figures, the child-psychologist endorses the utility of a story that, according to him, can contribute to the "emotional well-being" of maturing sons such as Hansel (165)—and presumably of male Holocaust survivors, like Bettelheim himself.

II.

Let me create a brief interlude to assess some of the implications of the materials I have been rehearsing. If the survivorship of Hansels and Gretels is to be refigured in narratives that promote the transformation of thinking children into thinking adults, such a narrativizing must presumably confront, however indirectly, the childhood trauma induced by parental desertion and the threat of annihilation. I have been suggesting that Wilhelm Grimm elided a residual anguish from the dubiously happy ending that Jarrell and Sexton, but not Bettelheim, tried to interrogate and transform. The difference between Bettelheim and the two poets, however, goes back to a fundamental contradiction already embedded in Freud's own work on trauma, a contradiction that has divided modern trauma theorists into what Ruth Leys labels as mimeticist and anti-mimeticist camps. Put simply, this contradiction pits those who believe that a victim of trauma is capable of reprocessing the original experience of shock against those who, much like Bettelheim, regard all accounts of trauma as fictive deflections from an unsettling past that has become

unrepresentable. For, according to Bettelheim, Hansel and Gretel are themselves fantasizers fearful of the painful separation that accompanies all growth: the children merely *think* that their parents want to starve them.

Sendak and Kushner's *Brundibar* picture book, I would argue, steers between these two camps. The authors endorse the fantasies of the opera's original child-performers because they hail their defiance of trauma as a wholesome and even heroic action. Yet, with the hindsight of history, they also know, as do their book's adult readers, what many of the Jewish children who were later killed were unable to anticipate: namely, that their fear of death could neither be allayed nor vanquished by a defiant imagination. Compensatory fantasies of rescue and of revenge could hardly overrule the reality of gas chambers and crematoria. Sendak and Kushner must therefore produce what might be called a double text. The disparity between a linear prose narrative set in dark capital letters and the occasional dialogue that is set, comic book style, in cartoonish drawings that hark back to Sendak's earlier work in the mini-texts of *The Nutshell Library*, creates an almost schizophrenic split between a child's consciousness and that of an adult.

As I have already suggested, even the drawings—the empty shoes left behind in a depopulated alley or those blackbirds that waft child-riders above the heads of their wailing mothers—inevitably evoke grim Holocaust icons. Yet the anxieties of a child/parent separation—always a major component of Sendak's work—are also mitigated somewhat by the fact that in *Brundibar*, as in the unabashedly joyous *Where the Wild Things Are* and *In the Night Kitchen*, it is the children, Aninku and Pepicek, rather than a paralyzed or debilitated parental figure, who boldly initiate the journey away from the family home.[4] This sister/brother pair thus is much closer to rebellious escapists such as Max or Mickey or Jenny and to the heroic Ida of *Outside Over There* than to Hansel and Gretel, children deprived of the agency they require in order to survive parental desertion. Despite their appropriation of a maternal role, Aninku and Pepicek do not have to grow up. By finding strength in numbers and forming an alliance with other children, they cease to be the victims of either adult neglect or the abuse of the adolescent Brundibar, the would-be adult whom Sendak planned to endow with the same Hitlerian mustache he had given to the trio of Oliver Hardy bakers who had shoved a defiant and unbattered Mickey-in-Batter into a steaming Mickey-Oven to bake a "delicious Mickey-Cake" in *In the Night Kitchen*.[5]

As Christian Czechs, Pepicek and Aninku can be more plausibly cast as triumphalist leaders of a fantastic child-crusade against Brundibar than the original Jewish child performers who found themselves confined behind barbed wire in a Nazi concentration camp. Their real-life anguish had to be avoided in a children's book, for it could neither be graphically reproduced nor transmuted by surrealist art. It is another Christian child in another text by Wilhelm Grimm, therefore, whose odyssey far more closely approximates little Gretel's. Pushed into a forest by a young mother who tries to shield her from the conflagration of war, the nameless girl-victim in Sendak's 1988 picture book *Dear Mili* dies of starvation, yet lives on in a Judaeo-Christian limbo supervised by a nurturing St. Joseph. When she returns to a dying mother who is now depicted, in Sendak's last illustration of the book, as just as old and wrinkled as the witch he drew in *The Juniper Tree*, the little girl has become an angel-child. She is as dead as Anne Frank and all the other Holocaust child-victims whom Sendak so lovingly planted into the garden-like forest that the bearded St. Joseph has tended. And yet, like these child-martyrs, she is also beatified, made immortal through the conjunction of verbal and visual art. Wilhelm Grimm's text of *Dear Mili* characteristically absolves the mother who has failed to save her child. But Sendak's illustrations for that text actually go far beyond that absolution, since he also wants us to forgive the European motherlands that so recklessly sacrificed both their Jewish and Christian children. By purging anger and sorrow, Sendak's exquisite rendering of this fable of reconciliation tries to come to terms with Germany's legacy of child-abandonment.

And yet, when Wilhelm Grimm wrote down this saint's tale for a motherless girl called Mili, he must have realized the story's proximity to his more punitive legend, "Saint Joseph in the Forest." There, a bad mother and her equally wicked oldest daughter are mortally stung by snakes unleashed by the same kindly hermit whom Grimm describes, and Sendak draws, as a protector of neglected and homeless children. Misogyny, racism, and witch-hunts that push imaginary child-killers into fiery ovens can often come perilously close to narratives that purport to be conciliatory or therapeutic. Bettelheim's confident reading of "Hansel and Gretel" as a text that validates his prescriptions for "emotional well-being" seems subverted, whether intentionally or not, by Sendak's *Brundibar* representations of the rotund and childlike doctor who happily dances away after Aninku and Pepicek have followed his therapeutic directions. Is this physician naively overconfi-

dent about his own chances of becoming a survivor? Is his ludic vitality endorsed or called into question by the book's darker subtext? The Sendak/Kushner text seems to straddle carefully these two alternative possibilities.

III.

What defensive weapons, then, are available to the child who is determined to survive the real or the perceived trauma of abandonment? How can that fearful child acquire a sense of empowerment?[6] Gretel and Hansel bribe their weak father with treasures stolen from the witch they have killed; Sara Crewe redistributes the wealth she has regained in order to erase her memories of a double trauma: the loss of her father and the abuses she suffered at Miss Minchin's. Reparation and forgiveness are dramatized in *Dear Mili* when the nameless waif returns as a ghost-child to ease her mourning parent's passage into the same death-world into which she was prematurely thrust. The fatherless Aninku and Pepicek also return from an order that is potentially one of deprivation and death. They restore their mother to life by supplying her with the milk they had obtained, as babies, from her depleted breasts. Like Max's defiance of mother and monster or Sara's earlier resistance of Miss Minchin's abuse, these are fantasies of empowerment that those gifted ex-children who turn into adult authors try to share with young and old through their rich narratives and lush illustrations. Wounds, these survivors seem to insist, can be healed by both oblivion and wishfulness.

There are, however, as I have already suggested by introducing the verses of Jarrell and Sexton, texts that tap what I have called the "Hansel and Gretel Syndrome" in ways that are decidedly nontherapeutic. By suggesting that psychic wounds may be irreparable or only partially capable of healing, an adult poem such as Jarrell's "A Quilt Pattern" contradicts the same writer's efforts to seek out child-readers for his fables of restoration, *The Animal Family* and *The Bat-Poet*. In the first of these books, the wounded Hunter, scarred by the absence of dead parents whose desertion he cannot forget, is unable to replace the lost trinity of father, mother, and child until the miraculous appearance of a baby boy whose own lost parents he and the Mermaid can now replace. That couple's earlier two "children," the dog-like Bear and the cat-like Lynx, could not satisfy a lack produced by their intraspecies sterility, their inability to create a hybrid offspring. Now,

however, a growing human boy can straddle—as Aninku and Pepicek did—what is presented as a double reality, his hunter-"father's" land and his mermaid-"mother's" more dangerous and more turbulent, because far more fantastical, sea-world. And the couple's pets, the Bear and the Lynx, can now acquire new responsibilities of their own as the boy's loving guardians by operating as avuncular figures, much as Baloo and Bagheera, the caretakers of Mowgli the wolf-boy, had done in *The Jungle Books* that Jarrell knew so well.

Mowgli, the baby abandoned by Indian woodcutters in the Seonee forest, is adopted by an animal family almost as fantastic as that concocted by Randall Jarrell. Rudyard Kipling's fantasies of restitution stemmed, as I have suggested in two earlier discussions of his work in *Children's Literature*, from memories of the physical abuse and emotional deprivation he suffered when his loving Anglo-Indian parents so abruptly left an unsuspecting Ruddy and his little sister Trix at the witch's abode he would later so bitterly call "the House of Desolation." Kipling's first account of that degradation in the 1888 novella *Baa, Baa, Black Sheep* (a fiction apparently stimulated by his reading, earlier that year, of Frances Hodgson's story of an Anglo-Indian child's desertion in her own novella *Sara Crewe*, the ur-text of *A Little Princess*) was separated by a half-century from the second account he reserved for the posthumous publication of his 1937 autobiography *Something of Myself*.

The decision to cast *Baa, Baa, Black Sheep* as a grim anti-Christmas story in which Ruddy became Punch and Trix became little Ju' (or Judy) was a risky act of exorcism for Kipling. He had never told his parents what had happened after they inexplicably left him at the mercy of the child-beater he drew as a witch in the manuscript illustrations reproduced in Thomas Pinney's fine edition of Kipling's autobiographical writings. Yet the story bitterly yokes a boy's rosy memories of a benign father and mother to their parental surrogate, the decidedly unrosy Aunty Rosa, Punch's relentless tormentor. Beaten with a cane and left alone "to weep himself into repentance," the boy makes a connection that proves far more painful than any of the blows he has received: "Aunty Rosa, he argued, had the power to beat him with many stripes. It was unjust and cruel, and Mamma and Papa would never have allowed it. Unless perhaps, as Aunty Rosa seemed to imply, they had sent secret orders. In which case he was abandoned indeed" (*Black Sheep* 149, 150).

Randall Jarrell's wonderfully perceptive essay "On Preparing to Read Kipling" captures the dilemma of a writer who considered his artistic

and gifted parents as his ideal readers. How could Kipling blame these "best of parents" for the severe trauma they had induced? It is exactly this contradiction, Jarrell shrewdly suggests, "that made Kipling what he was: if they had been the worst of parents, even fairly bad parents, even ordinary parents, it would all have made sense, Kipling would have made sense out of it. As it was, his world had been torn in two: for under the part of him that extenuated everything, blamed for nothing, there was certainly a part that extenuated nothing, blamed for everything—a part whose existence he never admitted, more especially not to himself" ("Preparing" 341).

Jarrell is correct here, yet Kipling did acknowledge that his childhood denigrations by a witch-like tormentor converted him into a successful fiction-maker. The "bullying" he tried to offset by fibbing, Kipling claims in his autobiography, "made me give attention to the lies I soon found it necessary to tell: and this, I presume, is the foundation of literary effort" (*Something of Myself* 6). The 1888 *Baa, Baa, Black Sheep* relies on artful deformations of the narrative that Kipling retold at the end of his life. Whereas the autobiography makes much of the refuge provided every December for five entire years by the boy's loving aunt, Georgina Burne-Jones, the story offers Punch no such shelter from child-abuse. And, in a minor, yet telling change, the book that a loving father sends from India to England is none of the texts recalled and assessed in the autobiography. Instead of sending *Robinson Crusoe* or Mrs. Ewing's *From Six to Sixteen*, a work as important to Kipling as to Burnett, the father in *Baa, Baa, Black Sheep* sends his son a collection of Grimm fairy tales. Presumably, the volume contained "Hansel and Gretel," a story Kipling certainly remembered when he decided, a few years later, to cast Mowgli as an abandoned woodcutter's son. The story of a brother and a younger sister who are confused by the abrupt disappearance of their parents was a fictional analog for a real-life event that the young writer clearly could not bring himself to forget.

Kipling found it difficult to write more children's books after the Great War in which Europe betrayed millions of its young. But the carnage that claimed his son was followed by an even more massive betrayal which he, for all his bitter forebodings about German fascism, did not live to see. Hindsight, as Hamida Bosmajian and Adrienne Kertzer have shown in their recent studies of Holocaust representations in children's literature, has helped us reassess yet also to disguise and sublimate the past for a generation of new young readers.

Given her own adult readership, Louise Murphy's extraordinary novel, *The True Story of Hansel and Gretel*, published the same year as the Sendak/Kushner collaboration, allows her relentlessly to confront the atrocities that *Brundibar* tries to soften

Amnesia becomes a leitmotif in a novel that boldly reconfigures as Jews the parents and children of Wilhelm Grimm's fairy tale. The mother—a stepmother, once again—who pushes the children into the dark forest hastily renames them and commands them to forget their actual Jewish names. The newly named "Gretel," now the older of the two siblings, blonde and blue-eyed, protects her younger and darker brother "Hansel." But, on being brutally raped in a Polish forest as treacherous as any of the dense woods in German fairy tales, the traumatized girl loses all memory of the past. In a further reversal of Grimm's emphasis, Murphy not only vindicates heroic stepmothers but also so-called "witches." The crone who shelters the renamed children, nurtures and tutors them, and finally dies in their stead; she is a "righteous Gentile" whose act of sacrifice will remain anonymous and unrecorded. After this old gypsy woman, Magda, has been gassed at Auschwitz, an inmate prepares the corpses for cremation. "He tugged at the bodies," writes Murphy. "There weren't many children anymore. Most were dead already, he guessed. He wondered if there were any children left in the world, but he stopped his mind from the thought. Thoughts were luxuries that led to death" (253).

Murphy's powerful revisions of "Hansel and Gretel" suggest that repression may, after all, be trauma's best antidote. Aided by dimmed recollections of his past, the boy called Hansel manages to recognize his surviving father at the end of the novel. But such a "happy" recognition is denied to the girl called Gretel, his older sister. She has no pearls and jewels to offer the weeping father who is reunited with the child he thought to have lost. Her identity has been erased. Her biological mother, her stepmother, and her surrogate mother, Magda, have all been killed. Forced to forget more than her own, long discarded, Jewish name, this young amnesiac is at least spared the horrors of her recent past.

Notes

[1]Although Tatar's translation of the story's final 1857 version in *The Classic Fairy Tales* is much closer to the German original, I do like Jack Zipes's freer rendition of Wilhelm's enthusiasm in *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*: "My, how happy they were!" (716).

[2]Jack Zipes's "The Rationalization of Abandonment and Child Abuse in Fairy Tales" offers an extremely helpful overview of the various versions of Wilhelm Grimm's text, its indebtedness to antecedents in Perrault and Basile, as well as its relation to other nineteenth-century German texts such as August Stöber's 1842 "Das Eierkuchenhäuslein" and Adelheid Wette's libretto for the 1893 Humperdinck opera. Zipes's contention that the narrative was meant to offer "some form of justification, legitimation, and apology in the minds of parents" for their abusive practices (60) strikes me as plausible, even though my own emphasis and approach are substantially different. As a Jewish boy saved from Nazi extermination by his father and mother, I am understandably less interested in anatomizing parental betrayal than in recovering a child reader's baffled response to wider and scarier forms of adult treachery. A story that encouraged generations of future adults to exult in the incineration and plunder of fellow-humans demonized as cannibalistic witches fascinates and repels me for reasons that are obviously as personal and idiosyncratic as those which have prevented me from regarding another German child-text of my boyhood, Heinrich Hoffmann's "Struwwelpeter," as a production as delightfully grim as any work by Edward Gorey (see Knoepflmacher, "Validating Defiance," 88–92). One's critical shortcomings, however, can often prove to be quite instructive.

[3]One of the few child-survivors not killed at Auschwitz was in the audience. I asked "Elsa" (who had sung the role of the Cat in the concentration camp's production of *Brundibar*) to sign my copy of the Sendak/Kushner book. I am honored to share her inscription with the readers of *Children's Literature*: "REMEMBER ME & MY FRIENDS."

[4]In *Higglety Pigglety Pop!* Jenny, too, initiates a journey away from the home where she had "everything." But the sprightly dog does not know what her artist-"master" knows, namely, that her translation to Castle Yonder has moved her into an everlasting bourne from which no earthly traveler can return.

[5]Sendak told his audience at the 92nd Street "Y" that he did not want to be too overt in representing Brundibar as an Adolf Hitler look-alike. The Oliver Hardy Baker, however, does make a reappearance in *Brundibar*, where he is shown loaded with a huge tray of pastries and confections that he has elevated above the reach of the hungry children. The visual resemblance between his Hitlerian mustache and Brundibar's fake whiskers is readily established by flipping over the next four pages.

[6]Another German text, also illustrated by Sendak, Wilhelm Hauff's *Dwarf Long Nose* (or *Zwerg Nase*), here comes to mind. As I have elsewhere explained, this "odyssey of [a] boy who is abducted, deformed, and yet endowed with superior powers by an aged sorceress who stamps him with her own [Semitic] features meant much to me" as a refugee child (Knoepflmacher, "The Critic"). It only now occurs to me that this other German story-teller called "Wilhelm" may well have written his *kunstmärchen* about a boy called "Jacob" as a wry challenge to the 1812 or 1819 versions of "Hansel and Gretel" in order to express his dissatisfaction with the conformist ideology of the brothers Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm. His naming of the metamorphosed boy, however, also carries other connotations. The biblical Jacob underwent a momentous transformation after the flight from his parental home that led to his renaming as "Israel," a fact that did not escape me as a child-reader traumatized by the sudden disenfranchisement of Vienna's Jews. I desperately clung to fables that would counter the trauma of dispossession and disempowerment.

Maureen Thum has valuably connected *Dwarf Long Nose* to other instances of Hauff's persistent fascination with Jewishness. She also notes that in his collection of fairy tales, the story of little Jacob's magical enchantment is followed by a more realistic tale called "Abner, the Jew Who Saw Nothing." That wry attack on blind bureaucrats who abuse a shrewd detective for his superior powers of observation was another, much reread, favorite of mine. I regarded Hauff's fairy tales as a welcome antidote to the anti-Semitic portraits in the otherwise attractive *kunstmärchen* of Clemens von Brentano.

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